

A
LETTER

Written out of the
COUNTRY
TO A
PARLIAMENT-MAN,

In ANSWER. to a *Quære* by
him made,

How the People generally stood in-
clined to the proceedings against the KING,
and the intended Change of
GOVERNMENT.



LONDON:
Printed in the Year 1649.

LETTER

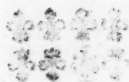
COUNTRY

TO A

PARLIAMENT-MAN

In Answer to a Query by
him made

How the People generally stood in
opposition to the proposed
and the intended Change of
GOVERNMENT



LONDON

Printed in the Year 1840

S I R,

I Suppose, you have made choice of me to satisfie you in these great particulars, as a man who (having in the late divisions of the Kingdom steered in so equall a way betwixt the King and Parliament) may be more willing and able impartially to discover the disposition and inclination of all parties (and consequently of the Kingdom in generall) then any other who hath appeared more concerned then my self. You have moved a question (I confesse) wherein I conceive my self bound to endeavour a satisfaction not onely to your self, but to the whole House whereof you are a Member, and all others who plead the necessity of a change of Government ; and if you still think me worthy of the credit which you have heretofore given to my opinion in other matters, I dare, without much arrogance, take upon me to give you as clear light herein, as most men can, having ever since the publishing of the Armes Remonstrance, made it my businesse to feel the pulse (and from thence conjecture the temper of all men, with whom I could gain free discourse, and that chiefly, because the Army, in that Declaration, usurpeth the name of the People of England.

But before I proceed to satisfie you, give me leave to undeceive you concerning the way of neutrality which I have hitherto professed. I call God to witnesse (before whom we must all, one day, give a just account of our actions) when the unhappy and fatal occasions of discord betwixt the King and His two Houses, were first (I determine not by whom) given, and those by the fiery spirits of some on both sides soon kindled into a War, my duty and allegiance to my Prince, and my naturall love to my Countrey and it's liberty suspended so the operation of my will, that like *Buridan's Ass* placed equidistantly betwixt two bottles of Hay, my hunger carried me so strongly to both, that I had not power to make choice of either : I was taught by the Word of God and Laws of the Realm, not to lift up my hand against my Sovereign

in any case, and it was equally imprinted in me by the Law of Nature, that I ought not to contribute to my own thralldome. Whether the Parliament had just grounds or not to suspect any tyrannicall designs in the King; or whether jealousies and fears were hereby pretended to engage the people in rebellion: whether to remove the King from his evill Counsellors, signified, to take away his life, or His Majesties withdrawing from the tumults of the City, was an offensive warre upon the Parliament, it was not within my private cognisance: both were pretended, and whilest the truth of each was equally uncertain, I chose rather to suffer the insults, reproaches, and plunders of both parties, then to engage with either; as supposing patience the safest way for a Christian, where action on either side might have involved me in treason to my Prince, or treachery to my Countrey. This was the true ground of my neutrality: and had the Parliament continued their solemn Protestations to God and man, wherein they asserained to us the integrity of their intentions; that they aymed at nothing but the glory of God, the purity of Religion, the greatnesse of the King, the honour and freedome of Parliament, and happinesse of the People, who was there amongst us that did not bid you ride on prosperously? But since by sad experience, we find, that all this shew of holinesse is put on to disguise self ends: that the glory of God is, as much as in you lyeth, turned into shame, by intitling him to all your impieties, as so many acts of his Providence. Religion is profaned by every frantick brain that can pretend the Spirit; and instead of the purity of the Gospel, you have revived all the exploded Heresies of former Ages.

As for the King let us behold his greatnesse: it is almost three yeers since you have kept him close prisoner, in which time (to satisfie the cry of the people) you have thrice entred into a Treaty of Peace with him, but intending surely nothing lesse, for your Demands have ever been so unbecoming the duty and modestie of Subjects, as if your sole ayme was to obtain a denyall, and then to lay the breach on his side; for when His Majestie hath been upon the point of condescending to all, you have thrice suffered (nay invited) inferiour persons in the Army audaciously to snatch him from your Commissioners, and now are readie to sacrifice

crifice his life to your great Idoll, for raising warre against his people : were you not once ashamed to acknowledge that you intended any hurt to his Royall Person, when he was your Enemy in the Field, and can you now legally try him for the same thing? But the inspired tell you, this must be done, lest *Samuel* rise up and reprove you, as he did *Saul* for sparing the Amalekites. Is this the honour and freedome of Parliaments, to sit and Vote the results of a Councell of Warre? to suffer your Members to be torn from the House by your own Servants? It was the Kings great crime, which made you pretend the War lawfull on your side, and meerly defensive, that He demanded five of your Members to Answer the Law for matters of high Treason, and shall five parts of six of the House of Commons be banished, imprisoned, or affrighted from thence, and a handfull of you continue the Session, and call your selves a Parliament? if you can interpret the shaking of a Sword hilt, freedome of Vote, what freedome, liberty, or property, shall the Subjects of *England* expect, but such as a licentious; usurping Army shall afford them?

I beleeve (Sir) by this time, you perceive what account you are likely to have from me, concerning the inclinations of the people; but if your superstition leadeth you to enquire farther in them, by way of Augury, as the *Romanes* did by inspection, into the entrails of their beasts, it will be requisite for you to clear 3. things, before you can gain their approbation (the necessity, the lawfulness, and advantage of a change). The necessity of this change is urged by the Army which cannot pretend to be so much concerned in the Government as the least Corporation of *England*, and it is grounded upon the equity of bringing offenders to Justice, by those who have not the legall power of a petty Constable: The offence which calleth for justice, is leavying war against the Kingdom; now (not to question the jurisdiction and power which are so ridiculously assumed) we enquire, if the Army are such severe chastisers of waging warre, why are they themselves such Enemies to Peace? This will be best cleared if we observe, how squint-eyed they are in all their actions. The Counties petitioned so earnestly, the last yeer, for a Personall Treaty, that the Army suspected their kingdom almost at an end, and with sadness forelaw, that they must return into their former condition;
this

this made them look upon the Petitioners as their onely *Enemies*, and assault, and slay them accordingly. which must either dvert them from their desires of Peace, or animate them to revenge, and so make them lawfull *Enemies*, either of which would conduce to their ends. So now that the Counties are forced to lay aside their Petitions, and all men betake themselves to their private groans, under the continuance of an unsettled Government, these plausible pretenders to severity against the occasioners of War, will arraign the King and murder him, thereby to perpetuate the divisions of the three Kingdoms, and so continue all power in their own hands; which is all that I can perceive of the necessity of a change.

As for the lawfulness thereof, by your enquiry into the inclinations of the people, you seem to expect the decision of right from them, and the subject of your curiosity is unjust, and you appeal to an incompetent Judge; for the people jointly taken have no power to determine matters of that nature; nor taken individually have they understanding: your *querie* therefore is preposterous in matter and form; and you might have saved your self and me a labour, if you had made your application to the proper Oracles (the Scripture, and the Laws) for information. I suppose then you desire not herein to know what you ought to do, but what may carry applause (whether well or ill done) and so seek not to please God but men. Not to leave you therefore unsatisfied in this, I must tell you, that many Jesuiticall attempts have been made in this and all the neighbour Counties, first by false suggestions, and scandalous imputations to detract from the honour of the King, and represent him to the abused multitude unworthy of the Government, and then the hands of some vagabonds have been by the solicitation of factious Ministers, affixed to Petitions, and tendred at the publick Sessions to be countenanced as the generall Act of the County. But although it be an error in Politicks to suppose, any appeal ought to be made to a people once subjected to government, I dare presume, if any such unjust way of tryall were practised in this part of the Kingdom, an hundred voices for one (if not awed by force) would appear for a peaceable settlement under our former Government, rather than to embroyl the Kingdom in a perpetuall War,

War, for the secret ambitious ends of some few particular persons, nowise qualified nor authorised to make a change. As for your self and the rest of the Members now sitting, whilſt you were two Houses, and thoſe entire, the People, although generally unſatisfied with your proceedings, yet revered the name of Parliament, and therein was your ſecurity ; but now that the Lords Houſe hath deſerted you (except ſome few inconsiderable perſons, notorious either for their puſillanimity, folly, or ingratitude) and the greateſt part of your own Members either baniſhed, imprifoned, terrified, or prudently forbearing to receive the Law from their mercenaries, and bind the Kingdom with their Enthuſiaſmes, that an handfull of you ſhould fit, and not onely call your ſelves a Parliament, but exclude the King, and Lords, and uſurp to your ſelves the legiſlative power, and therefore believe it properly your own, becauſe you have ſo Voted it, is a frenzy that I once thought, could not have entred within thoſe wals. Your arguments are, in brief, theſe ; *That You repreſent the People* : and *That all Power is originally in the People* : and thence you raiſe your dangerous ſuperſtructures. The miſunderſtanding, or miſ-application at leaſt, of that vulgar and true ſaying, *Salus populi ſuprema lex*, hath led you and others into error, from whence I am ſure, you have capacity enough to be reſcued. Know therefore that *Populus* ſignifieth the whole State, that is, the King and Lords, as well as the common People. Now, as the word *People* ſignifieth the whole body of the Common-wealth, the King is properly the ſole Representative of the people, and all their power is placed in him ; as to make War or Peace, to raiſe Moneys for the maintenance of War, to execute the Laws, to treat with forraign Princes, and the like. The Members of Parliament are Representatives of the People for particular matters, as to preſent new Laws to be made, or old to be repealed by the King, (which plainly ſheweth where the legiſlative Power reſideth) to repreſent the aggrievances of the people, or prefer their deſires, and in ſhort to appear for the people of the reſpective Counties and Corporations ſummoned by the King to conſult upon matters of publick concernment. Theſe Counties and Corporations they have not that power which you pretend, (for that were to make the government Anarchicall under a Monarch) nor can they

they derive more to you then themselves have.

Again, suppose the power were, as you pretend, in the People, it must be understood in the major part of the people, and consequently in the major part of the Representatives: but with what colour of equity can an inferior number of fastidious men invite an Army, to seclude their fellow-Members, and in their absence, not onely make Laws to binde the whole Kingdom, but alter the Government already established, and referre us to the wandring expectation of some others to be revealed hereafter in a dream? It hath been the prudent care of our forefathers so to respect the proper end of Government, (which is *The peace and safety of a people*) as to make choice of Monarchy (the best of Governments, because least subject to division and confusion). Now because there cannot be that form of Government found out, which (by reason of the inseparable corruption of mans nature) is not subject to abuse (and the abuse of Regall power is tyranny) they have therefore, to secure their posterity from the arbitrary power of Princes, erected that high Court of Parliament, which is so happily composed, that we are thereby protected from all excesses, for as the King cannot Enact or Repeal any Law without the consent of the two Houses (which preventeth all tyrannicall attempts) so neither can the Houses without the King (which secureth us from Anarchy and confusion); for if the legislative power were singly in either, it might be misapplied to the disadvantage of the other, which would consequently discompose the peaceable constitution of our Kingdom: so then if the Regall Power encroach upon our right, we have redresse by way of complaint in Parliament; But if you usurp the supreme Power to your selves, and either you or your Army tyrannise over us, from whom shall we expect relief?

Which leadeth me to the next Consideration of the advantage which can hereby accrue to the generality of the Commons of England, and wherein that can consist, I confesse ingeniously I am not wise enough to understand. Our Religion shall either be imposed at the will of the prevailing party, and consequently be alterable with every variety of fortune, or else we shall be left every one to the latitude of his own conscience, which will be apt to lean and byas toward ambition, lust, and avarice, as by the sad

sad experience of these times we are too well taught. Our Laws, (you say) shall be purged, and digested into a new Modell, but to what end, I discern not, unless it be that our ancient Laws (as likewise our ancient Religion) are diametrically opposite to your usurpations; for the same cause it is thought fit to destroy our flourishing Universities, to expose them to the Visitation of illiterate men, to root out those hopeful Plants of Divine and Humaine Sciences; and in their places to nourish spirits of ignorance and faction; hereby you endeavour, as much as in you lyeth, to captivate the very understandings of us and our posterity. This peece of Reformation you borrowed from *Jack Cade*, and *Watt Tyler*, whose wisdom thought it not fit to suffer any pen and ink-horn-men to live. Wherein then shall this change of Government appear beneficiall to us? is it, that you will have a greater care, of our protection? indeed *Absolon* promised as fair, if he were king, and we are pretty well acquainted with your performances.

But to clear the matter, we are not ignorant, That Government is to be maintained by the same means by which is acquired; if then you usurp it from the successe of your Army, you must keep a constant Army on foot to defend your possession, and then the benefit of the people is, in short, no other then this, a perpetuall Imposition upon their estates, to maintain this Army, a lasting War with *Scotland* and *Ireland*, who being not concluded by your Votes; will doubtlesse submit to their lawfull Prince: a defyaunce of all the power of Christendom, which (as it was wont to unite, by *Crossades*, against the *Turke*) will without doubt look upon you as the greater usurpers, and the more dangerous disturbers of all fundamentall Government, in as much as you make way to these your designs, by the height of Rebellion, Perjury, and forfeiture of Trust; and finally an unavoidable danger to their persons and estates if they resist your assumed power, and a contracting to themselves your guilt, and the punishment due to it in this world and the next, if they tamely submit.

But you presume that the head City will be a leading case to the rest of the Kingdom, yet this may possibly deceive you, for we cannot see why they should so readily contribute Commissioners to sit upon the life of their Sovereign, and thereby perpetrate to the Kingdome an exhausting Civill Warre, (whose change of

fortune may by the tryall of one single battall subject them to the implacable fury of a revengefull Successor, who will punish their exemplary defection with fire and sword) unless they had some assurance given them of exemption from future disturbances, or at least the leading men a share of the spoils if they will, as the coy Duck to betray the rest of the Kingdom into slavery. Thus if we look upon their blindness, we cannot think them fit for our example; or if upon their self ends, we shall not trust them. But you have the Law in your hands, you have an Army that hath won it by the Sword, and shall enforce it. I will not bestow the pains to shew you, how improper it is for a Kingdom to subdue it self, how ungodly it is for an Army (although composed of *Saints*) to plead victory over the power that raised them: how impossible it is to conquer those that fought not against you: such is my case, and I dare affirm the same of one half of the Kingdom.

If for all this you are not to be turned from your purposes, consider, at least, as rational men, with what difficulties you are to encounter in the compassing of those ends which you propose. Your first obstacle is the Kings life, but even that you plead al right, because a power; God hath given him into your hands; and your illuminations direct you to destroy him. Yet he delivered *Saul* into the hands of *David*: you know the rest of the story, is it not possible that the Spirit which thus familiarly converseth with you, may be a spirit of revenge, a spirit of ambition, a spirit of madnesse? The safest way to try the spirit is by Gods Word; he never gave that Authority to the Israelites, his own people, with whom he conversed face to face; nay the hand that cut off, although a wicked King, never yet went unpunished: and if an Angel from heaven should teach a Doctrine contrary to the revealed Word, we are commanded to account him accursed. If the impiety of the act deferre you not, yet as men who would seem to represent the Nation, be more tender of its honour: remember that the putting of the *Q. of Scots* to death in *Q. Elizabeth's* time, (although for Treason pretended against her Majesties Person) layed the foulest ignominy upon this Nation that ever it sustained (because therein was violated the Law of Nations): but how shall we sink in the nostrils of all the world, if
contrary

contrary to the direct precepts, manicipall, the nationall, the morall, and the Divine Law, we shall attempt such a horrid and barbarous impiety? There is nothing, I suppose, doth more precipitate you into the gulf of desperation, then that Machavillian rule of securing your former ills from punishment by attempting greater; you think (as well you may) that you have offended beyond forgiveness: I easily grant, that your forfeitures have been great, but whether it is not more probable that His Majestie who (I am confident) hath made his peace with God (a principall step whereunto is forgiveness) should pardon and forget your insults past, then that the Prince (who is tyed in honour to vindicate a Fathers death) should let you escape unpunished, I leave to your own judgement.

If your prosperity hath swelled you above all these respects, yet consider, you must propose some way of engaging the affections of your Nation fast to you, for forced obedience will deceive you. It is not probable that the Prince and His Alleys will sit as idle spectators of these your extravagancies: that the Nobilitie of *England* will tamely suffer themselves to be prostituted to parity, with the unqualified rable; or that the Commons will be fond of any new Majesties under whom they can hope for no improvement of condition. From these you can have no other imaginable security but by oath, which being imposed by force and terror, will peradventure be observed as long as that force is over them; but whensoever an Army shall appear in the behalf of the King and his posterity, you will finde your selves deserted, and all men return to their originall duty and engagements, and then you may be humbled to your former conditions, and perish unpitied. Thus in observance of your command I have delivered my minde freely; I hope you will make use of it to your good, and not to the prejudice of

Your faithfull Friend,

F I N I S: